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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/577,128	04/25/2006	Takashi Horaguchi	060340	8185
23850	7590	01/25/2008		EXAMINER
KRATZ, QUINTOS & HANSON, LLP				BLATT, ERIC D
1420 K Street, N.W.				
Suite 400			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
WASHINGTON, DC 20005,			3734	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			01/25/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/577,128	HORAGUCHI, TAKASHI
	Examiner Eric Blatt	Art Unit 3734

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 April 2006.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 2 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 2 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 25 April 2006 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 4-25-2006.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

Claim 2 is objected to because of the following informalities: claim 2 recites "a region in arthroscopic or endoscopic viewing field." An article (i.e. 'a', 'the') is needed preceding "arthroscopic or endoscopic." Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 2, claim 2 recites that the device "can shift the suture thread from a position on the operating surgeon's side to a position remote from the operating surgeon." The claim does not give an indication where the boundary of the operating surgeon's side is, nor of what it is a side. Additionally, this language makes it unclear what position may be considered remote from the surgeon.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mangum (US 5,397,326).

Regarding claim 2, Mangum discloses a suture thread shifting device (Figure 1) wherein a front edge of the device has a sectional configuration suitable for allowing the front edge to reach a region in an arthroscopic or endoscopic viewing field even when an incision portion of a surface layer of a human body is small. The device is capable of having a suture thread engage the front edge, and in doing so, is capable of shifting the suture thread from a position on the operating surgeon's side to a position remote from the operating surgeon. The front edge is bisected, the lengths of the bisected portions are different from each other, and the surfaces of the bisected portions are smoothly curved. (See Figure 1)

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Clarke; Henry C. N. (US 3871379): Laparoscopy instruments and method for suturing and ligation.
- Measamer; John P. et al. (US 5501690): Suturing device.
- Garrison; Michi E. (US 5601576): Surgical knot pusher and method of use.
- Mericle; Robert W. (US 575296): Surgical knot pusher with flattened spatulated tip.

- Carrillo; Hipolito (US 5906626): Suture depressor.
- Oren; Ran et al. (US 6511487): Suturing instrument and method.
- Singhatat; Wamis (US 6716224): Intracorporeal knot tier.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Eric Blatt whose telephone number is 571-272-9735. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM-6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Hayes can be reached on 571-272-4959. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Eric Blatt
571-272-9735



MICHAEL J. HAYES
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER